



## COMMISSION ON AGING

Department of Health and Human Services  
FY12 Community Budget Forum  
November 1, 2010

Testimony by Elaine Kotell Binder, Chair  
Commission on Aging

On behalf of the Commission on Aging (COA), I want to present our priorities for the FY12 budget.

Before identifying specific programs that we believe are critical, I want to stress how imperative it is that Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) views the cumulative effect of program reductions on older adults. The Commission is concerned about the impact of reductions on all older adults – the most vulnerable, the low-income seniors who live alone, and middle-income seniors who are aging in place and in need of a variety of services to maintain their well-being.

Our first priority, however, is the protection of vulnerable, at-risk seniors who depend on a variety of services without which they would be either in physical danger or need to be placed in a nursing home. While we recognize the fiscal constraints and the pressures placed on the DHHS, we want to urge that you consider the grave consequences of cuts to programs affecting this population – cuts that can make the difference between life and death for an individual. In addition, we want to be assured that seniors who are referred to Adult Protective Services (APS) be provided with the continuum of services that is a necessary element of the care programs designed to meet their needs.

Between FY07 and FY10, the number of investigations completed by the APS staff has increased by 22.6% (from 385 to 472 investigations). In FY09, 60% of APS referrals were for seniors 65 years and older. In FY10, the number of referrals for this age group increased to 72%, a significant upward trend. The Commission believes that we have an obligation to advocate for services for these most vulnerable adults and a responsibility to ensure their safety.

With regard to specific programs, we believe the following are the most vital, and we urge that you maintain their current funding:

- Assessment and Continuing Care Case Management,
- In-Home Aide Services,
- Assisted Living Services, and the
- Medicaid Waiver Programs

---

Department of Health and Human Services

401 Hungerford Drive, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 240-777-1120, FAX 240-777-1436  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhs)

The services provided by these programs are interconnected. Together they protect the physical safety, and perhaps the mental health, of individual older adults; they provide them with basic needs that enable them to remain in the community; and they contribute to some sense of self-sufficiency and prevent costly institutionalization.

Reductions to the Assessment and Continuing Care Case Management Services would mean that needed assessments will not occur; care plans will not be developed; and oversight of those individuals already in the program will be diminished. Reducing the hours provided for In-Home Aide Services was rejected last year by the State Department of Human Resources when affected individuals appealed, and the result was actual denial of services to some clients. Thus, reductions in this program this year will mean serving even fewer than the 280 clients already being served.

Reducing support to the Medicaid Waiver Program would reduce the ability to develop care plans. Since this program brings in \$12 to \$15 million of federal and state funded services to clients, it would also eliminate the leveraging of the County's relatively small contribution to the program. Finally, the Assisted Living Services provide not only for monitoring facilities, but also for adult foster care for individuals who cannot live independently.

Currently there are 147 people on the waiting list for case management, 1,559 on the waiting list on the Medicaid Waiver Program and 36 on the waiting list for In-Home Aide services. One can only imagine what happens to these individuals! If they die waiting for services, do we simply shrug our shoulders and say, "Well, they were old anyway?" We on the Commission cannot do that! We in the County cannot do that. We have a moral obligation to provide support to these individuals who cannot provide for themselves!

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Commission's priorities tonight.